



**ACQUISITION AND ASSISTANCE SPECIALIST**  
**Job Announcement No. AID – 008 -16**

**OPEN TO:** All Interested Candidates

**POSITION:** Acquisition and Assistance Specialist (Trainee) - 2 positions  
Kindly note that Announcement No. AID-008-16 is:  
Training Grade of FSN 9; Full Performance Grade is FSN 10.

**OPENING DATE:** July 22, 2016

**CLOSING DATE:** August 12, 2016

**WORK HOURS:** Full-time; 40 hours/week

**SALARY RANGE:** FSN-9 (ZMK 193,244.87 p.a. - ZMK 303,619.92 p.a.)  
FSN-10 (ZMK 260,481.82 p.a. - ZMK 400, 540.40 p.a.)

**BASIC FUNCTION:**

The Acquisition and Assistance Specialist (Trainee) will be located in the Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA) within USAID/Zambia. The OAA provides Acquisition and Assistance (procurement) support to USAID/Zambia Technical Offices, Development Objective (DO) and Assistance Objective (AO) Teams, in addition to responding to USAID Regional Office requests of the Mission.

The primary function of the Specialist (Trainee) position is to perform a variety of acquisition and assistance duties, including writing grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and other procurement instruments and prepare amendments in support of USAID/Zambia.

The Specialist (Trainee) reviews and recommends approval or revision of requisitions in the Global Acquisition and Assistance System (GLAAS); reviews and recommends approval or revision of scopes of work (SOW); drafts requests for proposal or quote; performs cost and price analysis; analyzes proposals or quotes received; drafts contracts and contract modifications; analyzes contractor-proposed budgets; recommend revisions to various contract provisions; and prepares Memoranda of Negotiation and other required documentation.

The Acquisition and Assistance Specialist (Trainee) maintains and updates contract files and records, prepares Contractor Performance Reports (CPRs), and supports award closeouts. The Specialist (Trainee) also provides guidance related to administrative award modifications. The Specialist (Trainee) will be responsible for carrying out day-to-day activities in an independent manner.

Acquisition and Assistance Specialist positions are part of an established career ladder, beginning at FSN-09 and ending at FSN-10. Attainment of the full-performance grade is contingent on the Specialists successfully completing required training, meeting agreed-upon objectives and milestones, and performing in a Fully Successful (or equivalent) manner. Promotion to the target FSN-10 grade level is not mandatory, and failure to achieve that high level of performance may be the basis for dismissal.

## **MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

a. The Acquisition and Assistance Specialist (Trainee) will be responsible for program/project/activity acquisition and assistance support for USAID/Zambia Technical Offices, Development Objective and Assistance Objective Teams, and designated Regional clients. As USAID/Zambia programs are diverse and multi-sectoral, the Acquisition and Assistance Specialist is required to provide assistance to designated Technical Offices and/or DO/AO Teams, in support of a variety of programs/projects/activities. These programs/projects/activities are implemented through complex government contracting and grant mechanisms, including, but not limited to, purchase orders, competitively negotiated technical assistance agreements, contracts, cooperative agreements, Participating Agency Service Agreements (PASA), and sole source contracts.

b. The Specialist (Trainee) is expected and required to select the appropriate procurement instrument type for the situation at hand, and to accurately apply U.S. Government procurement laws, regulations, policies, and procedures governing each type of instrument. The advanced developmental nature of the assignment includes the acquisition of goods and various types of services. The Specialist (Trainee) must be equally familiar with the procedures for acquisition of goods, and for managing personal service and non-personal service contracting actions.

c. The Specialist (Trainee) is expected to work with specialists/activity managers in Technical Offices and DO/AO Teams within the Mission and throughout the Region; assist in the preparation of annual procurement plans; and help in the development of clear and concise statements of work and full supporting documentation. The Specialist (Trainee) must be able to provide authoritative technical guidance to technical specialists/activity managers, pertaining to their procurement-related responsibilities and procedures. Specific duties include:

Pre-Award Duties – the Specialist (Trainee) assists technical DO/AO Team personnel in the analysis of annual program plans, and advises on the selection of appropriate acquisition and assistance mechanisms to help achieve program objectives; assists technical personnel in the preparation of required descriptions of proposed activities, including statements of work, specifications, and activity descriptions; prepares pre-solicitation documents and clearances, including determinations, justifications, synopses, and solicitations; and reviews GLAAS Requisitions (REQs) for completeness and clarity.

The Specialist (Trainee) advises on the adequacy of evaluation criteria, proposed contracting mechanisms, the extent of advertising required, and any other required terms and conditions. In coordination with Technical Offices and/or representatives of host-country governments, the Specialist (Trainee) evaluates and analyzes bids and proposals, ensuring compliance with evaluation criteria. The Specialist (Trainee) assists in the development of pre-negotiation costs or programmatic objectives, in conjunction with the Contracting (CO)/Regional Contracting Officer (RCO) and/or his/her designee, technical personnel, and others; recommends the competitive range, and negotiates with potential awardees; documents negotiations in writing; assists in technical and cost evaluations; recommends the selected contractor and prepares contract files, to include making required certifications and determinations necessary for each procurement action; and, prepares award documents that accurately reflect all discussions and provisions relevant to the type of award mechanism to be implemented.

**Post-Award Duties** – The Specialist (Trainee) monitors performance as required by the terms and conditions of the award, through review of performance and review of financial reports; manages the assigned portfolio; assures that funding is available when required; and, works with DO/AO Teams/CORs/AORs to assure targets/milestones are set and being met (or that remedial action is taken), and that the overall goals of the program/project/activity are met; conducts site visits and attends meetings; and, provides guidance to technical personnel and assists in programmatic duties as required to avoid contractual/legal improprieties. The Specialist (Trainee) assists the CO/RCO with issues that may arise during contract performance, including changes, work stoppages, disputes, implementation problems, defaults, cost overruns, unacceptable performance, and payment problems.

**d. The Acquisition and Assistance Specialist (Trainee)** conducts closeouts of contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements after completion; closeouts include ensuring contract audits are conducted in a timely manner, preparing performance documentation, and resolving outstanding issues noted in audits.

**e.** Performs other duties as assigned or required.

## **QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE**

**a. Education:** A Bachelor's Degree or the equivalent of a four-year US college/university (or equivalency accreditation if a non-US institution) degree in accounting, law, business, finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and/or organization and management is required.

**b. Prior Work Experience:** Four or more years of progressively responsible experience in acquisition and assistance, development assistance, or a closely related field is required. As this position is part of a recognized and established career ladder, a minimum of one year of this experience must have been gained working in a USAID Contracting/A&A Office at no less than the next lower grade level.

**c. Post Entry Training:** The Acquisition and Assistance Specialist (Trainee) will be provided formal training; successful completion of all mandatory Federal Acquisition Certification courses leading to successful completion of Contracting (FAC-C) Level II, in accordance with a formal individual development plan (IDP), is required for progression to the FSN-10 level; along with at least a Fully Successful or equivalent performance evaluation.

Additionally, in progressing toward the full Specialist level, the Trainee will be provided other formal and/or on-the-job training as considered appropriate, based on availability of course offerings, and availability of funds.

**d. Language Proficiency:** Level IV (Fluent) English and local language proficiency (if appropriate), both oral and written, is required. Familiarity with additional languages in Office-supported countries is desired.

**e. Knowledge:** Knowledge of public and/or private-sector business processes, or the ability to quickly gain such knowledge, is required. An understanding of U.S. Federal and USAID Acquisition Regulations, and/or knowledge and understanding of how to execute and administer a complex acquisition portfolio, and/or the ability to quickly gain such understanding, is required, particularly as it relates to acquisition through methods of negotiation, sealed bidding, small purchase procedures, and that result in standard and established contract types. A basic understanding of markets pertaining to program/project/activity requirements for services and commodities, and a good knowledge and understanding of US market and pricing methods.

**f. Skills and Abilities:** The ability to plan and administer acquisition activities, and provide adequate acquisition assistance and support for agency programs and projects in a timely manner is required. The ability to apply governing contracting regulations, procedures, and policies to assigned acquisition and assistance programs is required. An ability to deal effectively with high-level representatives of the U.S. and regional business community, and with colleagues in USAID Missions and/or host governments throughout the region is required. Skill in the use of most elements of the Microsoft Business suite is required.

Good analytical, negotiating, and time management skills, along with strong proofreading skills and attention to detail, are required. The ability to work calmly, tactfully, and effectively under pressure is essential, as well as the ability to maintain strict CONFIDENTIALITY, and meet all STANDARDS OF CONDUCT/ETHICS STANDARDS in accordance with U.S. law throughout all phases of acquisition and assistance procurement processes.

## **POSITION ELEMENTS**

**a. Supervision Received:** The Acquisition and Assistance Specialist (Trainee) will work under the general guidance of the Contracting Officer/Regional Contracting Officer and/or his/her designee, or a higher-level Specialist/Officer, who makes assignments in terms of the range of procurement actions the Specialist will perform. The Specialist independently initiates necessary coordination with requesting mission CORs/AORs, Technical Offices, and DO and AO Teams providing policy and strategic guidance on how to best fulfill requirements, and with OFM and RLA, staffs of other agencies, and with awardees. The Specialist keeps the Contracting Officer/Regional Contracting Officer, and/or his/her designee, updated through periodic status reports and verbal briefings. Completed work is reviewed from the overall standpoint of providing a viable procurement approach for results achieved, in meeting delivery schedules, and in the selection of appropriate contract methods.

**b. Available Guidelines:** Guidelines include the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), USAID Acquisition Regulations (AIDAR), Automated Directives System (ADS), Contract Information Bulletins (CIBs), U.S. Department of State Standardized Regulations, Federal Travel Regulations (FTR), Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars, Mission Orders, and grant format requirements.

**c. Exercise of Judgment:** The Specialist (Trainee) must exercise a high degree of sound judgment in handling all aspects of pre-award and post-award actions, when advising CORs/AORs and Mission staff, and when interacting with implementing partners (IPs) to resolve complex issues arising during program/project/activity implementation. The Specialist must exercise good judgment in dealing with visitors and callers; in the analysis of cost, financial, and other characteristics of prospective contractors and grantees; and, in deciding what questions need to be asked of Technical Officials and DO and AO Team representatives and proposed contractors/grantees, in order to ensure achievement of the acquisition objectives on contract, grant, or other assistance instruments. Unusual decisions and matters of policy are referred to the Contracting Officer/Regional Contracting Officer and/or his/her designee.

**d. Authority to Make Commitments:** The Specialist (Trainee) is required to hold discussions and negotiations with potential contractors and grantees to reach agreement on statements of work/program descriptions and budgets. The Specialist has the authority to conclude negotiations and to structure the final terms and conditions of USAID acquisition and assistance instruments, as assigned. The agreements must be approved and signed by a warranted Contracting Officer/ Regional Contracting Officer and/or his/her designee, in order to obligate funds.

**e. Nature, Level, and Purpose of Contacts:** The Specialist is in daily contact with staff throughout USAID/Zambia, with managers of any serviced Missions/Offices in the Region, Technical Office staffs and DO and AO Team Leaders, and CORs/AORs. The Specialist is also in regular contact with grantees, potential grantees, visitors, and mid- to high-level officials from both the public and private sectors, as well as with NGOs and IPs, in order to exchange and/or collect information, and to provide advice relating to program implementation.

**f. Supervision Exercised:** The Acquisition and Assistance Specialist (Trainee) is a non-supervisory position, although the Specialist may be assigned as an acting Leader for short periods of time. The Specialist may provide limited guidance to lower-level acquisition staff, trainees, and clerks.

**g. Time Required to Perform Full Range of Duties:** One year.

## **SELECTION PROCESS**

Applicants who meet the required qualifications for the Acquisition and Assistance Specialist position will be evaluated based on information presented in the application and obtained through reference checks. USAID reserves the right to conduct telephonic interviews with the most qualified and ranked candidates, and make the interview a key deciding factor in selection. USAID does not pay for any expenses associated with the interviews unless expenses are pre-authorized.

Applicants must list at least three references and provide current contact information, preferably both an e-mail address and a telephone number. The Selection Committee will conduct reference checks on all applicants who meet the required minimum qualifications.

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

### **Education (20%):**

A Bachelor's Degree or the equivalent of a four-year US college/university (or equivalency accreditation if a non-US institution) degree in accounting, law, business, finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and/or organization and management.

### **Prior Work Experience (30%):**

Four or more years of progressively responsible experience in acquisition and assistance, development assistance, or a closely related field. (10%)

Experience in writing grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and other procurement instruments. (20%)

### **Evidence of English writing and oral skills proficiency (20%):**

Fluency in spoken and written English (Level IV - fluent), with demonstrated excellent written and oral communication skills.

### **Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (20%):**

Knowledge of public and/or private-sector business processes and understanding of how to execute and administer a complex acquisition portfolio through methods of negotiation, sealed bidding, small purchase procedures that result in standard and established contract types.

### **Summary Statement (10%):**

One-page summary statement that highlights how applicant's education and experience have prepared them to meet the specific challenges of the duties and responsibilities outlined.

## **TERMS OF APPOINTMENT:**

Subject to availability of funds, this will be a five-year contract, with an option to extend, depending upon continuing need of the services.

## **BENEFITS:**

The position has been classified at FSN-10 levels. The actual salary of the successful candidate will be negotiated within that range depending on qualifications and previous earnings history.

## **APPLYING:**

Qualified candidates should send:

1. A formal **application letter or cover letter**;
2. **A current CV**;
3. Photocopies of all professional certificates and degrees;

4. A fully complete application form DS-174 (available online at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/136408.pdf>); and
5. Contact information for at least three professional references.

**SUBMIT ALL APPLICATION MATERIALS TO:**  
**[EXOZambiaHR@usaid.gov](mailto:EXOZambiaHR@usaid.gov)** (E-mailed applications required.)

The email subject heading **must** read:

**Application: Acquisition and Assistance Specialist, AID-008-16**

**Only short listed candidates will be contacted.**